

the agents of peaceful change on the island. This Act provides further support for the Administration's efforts to strengthen independent organizations in Cuba intent on building democracy and respect for human rights. And I welcome its call for a plan to provide assistance to Cuba under transitional and democratically elected governments.

Consistent with the Constitution, I interpret the Act as not derogating from the President's authority to conduct foreign policy. A number of provisions—sections 104(a), 109(b), 113, 201, 202(e), and 202(f)—could be read to state the foreign policy of the United States, or would direct that particular diplomatic initiatives or other courses of action be taken with respect to foreign countries or governments. While I support the underlying intent of these sections, the President's constitutional authority over foreign policy necessarily entails discretion over these matters. Accordingly, I will construe these provisions to be precatory.

The President must also be able to respond effectively to rapid changes in Cuba. This capability is necessary to ensure that we can advance our national interests in a manner that is conducive to a democratic transition in Cuba. Section 102(h), concerning the codification of the economic embargo, and the requirements for determining that a transitional or democratically elected government is in power, could be read to impose overly rigid constraints on the implementation of our foreign policy. I will continue to work with the Congress to obtain the flexibility needed if the United States is to be in a position to advance our shared interest in a

rapid and peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba.

Finally, Title IV of the Act provides for the Secretary of State to deny visas to, and the Attorney General to exclude from the United States, certain persons who confiscate or traffic in expropriated property after the date of enactment of the Act. I understand that the provision was not intended to reach those coming to the United States or United Nations as diplomats. A categorical prohibition on the entry of all those who fall within the scope of section 401 could constrain the exercise of my exclusive authority under Article II of the Constitution to receive ambassadors and to conduct diplomacy. I am, therefore, directing the Secretary of State and the Attorney General to ensure that this provision is implemented in a way that does not interfere with my constitutional prerogatives and responsibilities.

The Cuban regime's lawless downing of two unarmed planes served as a harsh reminder of why a democratic Cuba is vitally important both to the Cuban and to the American people. The LIBERTAD Act, which I have signed into law in memory of the four victims of this cruel attack, reasserts our resolve to help carry the tide of democracy to the shores of Cuba.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

March 12, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 927, approved March 12, was assigned Public Law No. 104-114.

Remarks on Departure for the Summit of the Peacemakers

March 12, 1996

Good afternoon. As you know, I am on my way to Sharm al-Sheikh for an unprecedented summit in support of peace in the Middle East. I will meet there with the leaders of Israel, many of the Arab countries, Russia, Europe, and other nations to condemn the appalling acts of terror that have occurred in Israel in the last several days and to find ways to combat those who still seek to kill peace with violence.

The will of the people for peace is clearly greater than the forces of division. As we have seen in Northern Ireland and Bosnia and around the world, America must continue to support those who seek peace, and America will continue to support those who seek peace.

This Summit of the Peacemakers can be an important step in the process toward peace in the Middle East. After the summit I will also make a short visit to Israel to stand with the

people there in their time of grief. I will also bring a message that in this time of difficulty and in the battle against terror and the struggle for peace, Israel is not alone.

Before I leave I would also like to say something to the Congress. We face here urgent domestic issues that demand our attention and our action. This Friday the Government will shut down for a third time if Congress does not pass a funding bill. Today I signed a temporary measure to ensure the creditworthiness of the United States until approximately the end of the month. But to preserve the full faith and credit of America, Congress must pass a long-term, straightforward debt extension.

Other significant legislation also awaits action. We should pass a balanced budget plan that reflects our values and supports our economic growth. The Congress and I have identified in common over \$700 billion in savings, more than enough to balance the budget in 7 years and to protect Medicare and Medicaid and our investments in education and the environment, and to provide modest but important tax relief.

We should also pass a bipartisan welfare reform bill that genuinely moves people from welfare to work and strengthens families. And we

should pass the Kennedy-Kassebaum health care bill so that working people do not lose their health insurance when they change jobs or when someone in the family gets sick.

Agreement on all these bills is clearly within reach. Our Nation must move forward. We cannot wait until after November to do the people's business. We have an obligation to keep the Government open and funded, and we have a distinct opportunity, if we act now, to pass the right kind of balanced budget, welfare reform, and health insurance reform.

I say again to Congress what I said in the State of the Union Address and what I have said repeatedly since: My door is open. I am ready to meet with the leaders of the Congress at any time to move forward on any or all of these matters of national urgency. It is time to put partisan politics aside and work together in the national interest. Spring is coming, and we ought to give the American people a rebirth of bipartisan, productive accomplishment in this new spring.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With King Hussein of Jordan Aboard Air Force One March 12, 1996

President's Health

Q. How's your cold?

The President. It's okay. Like I said, Hillary had a cough and then Chelsea was sick and I sort of got it. It'll be gone in a day or two. It's just a head cold, it's not any big deal—just from the neck up.

Q. Does it bother your ears?

The President. No.

Air Force One

Q. You know—[inaudible]—is a certified pilot of this aircraft.

The President. Right. Well, he was up there on takeoff. I don't know if he lifted us off or not.

King Hussein. I watched and was very impressed by the wonderful, professional team up there.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What are you guys going to talk about?

The President. A lot of—[inaudible].

Q. Any surprises coming out of this summit, Mr. President? What do you expect?

The President. I don't know. I think a very strong statement will come out of it and that we may have some pretty good ideas come out of it for what we can all do together. I hope so. But I thank His Majesty for standing up for the right thing in the Middle East and helping to get so many other countries involved in this. He's got quite a remarkable array of people actually coming together on short notice.